Cerebra all set to tackle e-waste on large scale

Our Bureaus

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Exchanging old stuff for new be it television, refrigerator, mobile phone or even a computer is no big deal. But have you ever paused to even consider how such old and worn out goods are disposed?

Most think that this is not their problem as long as there is someone to take these stuff. And it is also not strange to find systems being dumped in cellars of, say, branches of banks, educational institutions, government organisations and at times even in the bin on the roadside.

"There is no accurate estimate of the quantity of e-waste generated and recycled, leave alone the low level of awareness amongst manufacturers and consumers of the hazards of incorrect e-waste disposal. Widespread recycling of e-waste is happening, though in the informal sector using rudimentary techniques such as open-air burning resulting in severe environmental damage," said Mr V. Ranganathan, Managing Director of Cerebra Integrated Technologies.

Stressing the need for addressing the problem, he said: "The volume of e-waste is rising significantly by the day. It could be close to one million tonne a year. At Cerebra, we decided to address this issue in a small way with the import of a mobile shredder from Cimelia, Singapore."

PLANT COMING UP

The first phase of Cerebra's e-waste management project is ready and the large plant would be up and running within the next four-five months, he told *Business Line*. Sharing details, the Cerebra chief said the facility was coming up on a 10-acre plot in Peenya, Bangalore, with an investment of Rs 50 crore. It may be recalled that Cerebra had inked an MoU with the Government of Karnataka for acquiring the land before entering into a tie-up with Cimelia Resource Recovery Pte Ltd for technology support.

Having begun the first phase of the e-waste management process, which is separation of metals, non-metals and processing of the Printed Circuit Board in the mobile shredder, the company, he said, was sending the crushed PCBs to Singapore for further processing and raw material extraction.

"Once the large plant is ready, we will be able to handle 90,000 tonnes of e-waste a year. We are gearing up to address the rapidly growing e-waste recycling and management market in India. Studies show that Bangalore alone generates about 70,000 tonnes of e-waste in a year and accounts for over 30,000 obsolete computers," he said.

According to an UNEP report titled 'Recycling from E-Waste to Resources', the quantity of e-waste produced – including mobile phones and computers – could rise by 500 per cent over the next decade in some countries, such as India.

He further said that the facility would be able to recycle e-waste completely. "Cimelia would run the business for us for three years," he said in response to a query.

The company is contemplating to expand the project of e-waste recycling and management in the northern, western and eastern zones in a year or two. Asked if the Singapore-based technology partner had a stake in Cerebra, he said, "they have been allotted some equity shares. We are awaiting the FIPB approval."